



To Jonathan Hoag, Esq.

On His 88th Birthday, February 10, 1919

Once more auspicious Time, in annual round,
Shows a skill'd bard, with added laurels crown'd;
Whilst eager throngs, well-pleas'd with lenient Fate,
Acclaim harmonious HOAG, turn'd eighty-eight!
What may we say, as we with joy behold
One who can flourish, never growing old;
Whose moving strains our list'ning grandsires knew,
Yet who can charm ourselves with art as true?
What may we write of his Parnassian Jays
Beyond our censure, and above our praise?
Life is a mountain, reaching to the sky,
With peak for ever hid, supremely high;
Its slipp'ry slopes each mortal seeks to scale—
Seeks but to pause, to falter, and to fail.
Who can predict the fame of him whose feet
Mount ever up, nor waver in retreat?
Thus climbs our Greenwich singer o'er the rest,
Attains the purer air, draws nigh the crest;
How wide and beauteous must his vision find
Life's spreading landscape, when he looks behind!
Well may his quill, in that exalted place,
At once the world's and heaven's beauties trace;
In retrospection tell of stream and grove,
Yet with like art describe the scenes above.
So sounds the lyre that sweeter grows with age;
So gleam the lines on Hoag's Pierian page;
Life, Death and Immortality he sings,
Yet glads our fancy with terrestrial things.
How bright his picture of the simple school,
Where rustic masters held benignant rule,
Or of the snowclad slope, where light and free
The red-cheek'd coasters glide in youthful glee!
With magic notes his songs enchant our ears,

Revive the happy past, and melt the years.
May lesser bards compete with one whose Muse
Each year superior splendor can diffuse?
Who is so bold, that he can hope to gain

An equal skill, or chant an equal strain?
High on the mount our Scriba stands alone,
And blends a former aera with our own.
Scriba, for thee I wish a future bright
With every known, and yet unknown delight;
May the fond Fates that bless'd thy days of yore,
On riper years repeated favours pour;
May Phoebus smile on thine increasing skill,
And Aesculapius shield thy form from ill;
May Nymphs and Dryads of the founts and woods
Preserve thy joy in sylvan solitudes;
May Jocus guide thy never-failing wit,
And sprightly Comus at thy banquets sit;
And best of all, mayst thou for ever live
Midst bliss as keen as that thy verses give!

H. P. Lovecraft.

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